



Meeting of West Dean Parish Council

Wednesday 18 November 2020 commenced at 7:30pm

Held by video conference (in order to protect the health and safety of councillors and members of the public during the COVID-19 pandemic)

Present: Harry Urquhart (HU) – Chair, Jane Higgins (JH), Bill Seabrook (BS), Christine Warry (CW), Andy Francis (AF), David Sutton (DS), and Sarah Hurst (SH)

Others present: Melanie Camilleri (MC) – Clerk/RFO, Councillor Richard Britton (Alderbury and Whiteparish division), and 3 members of the public

83/20 Apologies for Absence: None

84/20 Declarations of interest: AF declared an interest as a member of the West Dean River Group (Agenda 88/20)

85/20 The Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 21 October 2020 were approved and signed.

86/20 Public Forum

87/20 To receive a report from Cllr Devine (Wiltshire Council): No report was given as Cllr Devine did not attend.

88/20 River Dun Management

HU provided the background on the remit of the River Group established on the back of the 2013 floods i.e. consider and report back to WDPC on solutions for:-

- a) Flooding
- b) River Restoration
- c) Annual Vegetation Clearance

Cllrs Fiona Collier and Deborah Hook were in attendance from WTPC and invited to join forces with WDPC in tackling these joint issues about the River Dun (as both Hampshire and Wiltshire households are impacted).

It was unanimously decided that:-

- Activity under b) River Restoration and c) Annual Vegetation Clearance: will return under the control of WDPC and managed by DS. Cllr Britton confirmed there may be SWAB Grants available if tackled as an Annual Community Event usually with the proviso the PCs financially support. Cllr Fiona Collier confirmed TVBC Grants may be available too.
- Activity under a) Flooding: West Dean Parish Council will liaise with the River Group and AF will take on this liaison role.

WDPCs position for **all** activity under a-c was restated (from its meeting Nov 2014 (Agenda 78/14)): *'work should not be undertaken without any external validation, because if they should prove to be counterproductive the PC could be accused of exacerbating the situation'*.

Reasons external validation is essential:-

- i) WDPC are not environmental experts
- ii) Work is being carried out in a Conversation site

- iii) Without consultation and validation by key stakeholders, WDPC will be open to:-
 - o claims of 'loss' if the work undertaken was counterproductive and exacerbated the situation. In such an event, insurance cover would not be valid
 - o prosecution for offences under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. It is an offence to kill, injure or disturb Water Voles; be it intentional or by not taking enough care. Displacement of Water Voles or any alteration to their habitat are actions not to be taken lightly.
- iv) The long-term benefits and overall efficacy of any option (preventing the scale of flooding experienced over Christmas 2013) may be outweighed by the financial implications.
- v) Any solution (by volunteers or professionals), the Parish Council would need to undertake a full Risk Assessment and be satisfied on adequacy of insurance cover (including Public Liability).

Next steps

- Flood Warden: John Holland has stepped down as Flood Warden. AF agreed to take-up that position.
- Wiltshire Council webinars running Flood Warden (24/11), Snow Warden (25/11), and Community Emergency Volunteer Coordinator (26/11). AF hopes to attend 24/11. MC hopes to attend 25/11
- AF (in his capacity as member of the River Group) to progress discussions with Wiltshire Council's Flood Resilience Officer (Renate Malton) and approach the Environment Agency (who are the Risk Management Authority because the River Dun is classified as a main river)
- DS (in his capacity as Councillor) to seek 'external validation' in writing for proposed activity under b) River Restoration and c) Annual Vegetation Clearance as well as approach the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust for their support in carrying out such activity (Cllr Britton confirmed their involvement will strengthen WDPCs case for a Grant Application to SWAB)

Cllr Fiona Collier requested that:-

- WDPC appoint a councillor liaison for WTPC (in the same way Cllr Deborah Hook is WTPC's liaison for WDPC).
- any quotes for proposed work follows the procurement process.

89/20

Planning

20/08991: Green Acre, Dean Road, West Dean, Salisbury, SP5 1HT

Proposal: Single storey side extension to create open kitchen / dining / living space.

CW proposed, seconded by DS and resolved unanimously NO OBJECTION.

90/20

Finance

- i) No new payments were presented for approval

Bank balances

Main Account (as at 22 Oct 2020): £5,235.91

Savings Account (as at 09 Oct 2020): £6,113.51

Main Account

Payee	Detail	Amount £	Method
M Camilleri	Clerk Salary + office space	483.99	S/order
Void	Void	-	711
Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal	Remembrance Sunday Wreath	16.00	712
Total debit		£499.99	

- ii) SH delivered a Presentation on Parish Online and the benefits it delivers to the Parish Council. It was unanimously resolved to subscribe (discounted to £28.80 as we are members of WALC).
- iii) SH indicated that both Website domain and URL were due to be renewed. MC has built-in costs to the budget.
- iv) SH delivered a presentation on the findings of the Village Survey (focussing on prioritising Village Maintenance). The impact upon the Budget/Precept 2021/22 highlighted.
- v) Budget/Precept 2021/22 discussed at length, specifically maintenance expenditure due to the proposed marked increase in WDPC Precept.

Key point of discussion is the fact that West Dean Precept (and how West Dean's Village Maintenance is financed) is sourced by Wiltshire households. Hampshire households pay into the WTPC Precept. Discussion took place on financing some West Dean projects through community fund-raising (as opposed to the WDPC Precept) which will involve both Wiltshire and Hampshire households.

It was decided that before the Precept is finalised, further community engagement to take place (by Social media, electronic Newsletters, and use of WDPC Noticeboards) so that Wiltshire residents in particular are informed of the increase in Precept and have the opportunity to raise any questions/objections). SH will lead.

The Budget/Precept 2021/22 will be finalised at the PC meeting 14 Jan 2021 in time for Wiltshire Council's deadline 18 Jan 2021.

91/20

Correspondence, AOB and urgent matters

- i) Christmas Tree on The Green: AF reported on sourcing a Xmas Tree. Given the uncertainty over CV19 restrictions on social gatherings (and carol singing), arrangements will be made closer to the time by email.
- ii) Parish Council meeting dates for 2021. Thurs 14 January. Dates to be set thereafter.
- iii) HU reported on an email from West Dean Social Club regarding an electricity bill for the lamppost outside the Club. MC confirmed WDPC do not (and have never) pay electricity charges for any of the streetlights in West Dean and that historical records indicate electricity for the streetlights was paid by Salisbury District Council. The West Dean Club should therefore pursue their enquiry with Wiltshire Council.

92/20

Next Parish Council Meeting

The date of the next West Dean Parish Council Meeting will be held on **Thursday 14 January 2020 at 7:00pm** by video conference.

Being no further business, HU closed the meeting at 22:04pm